

Message Text

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R 061310Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3775

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 9807

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IR

SUBJ: LEBANESE AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS ON CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON

REF: TEHRAN 9602

1. IN PRIVATE LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH DCM OCTOBER 4, LEBANESE AMBASSADOR KHALIL AL-KHALIL GAVE LONG PESSIMISTIC ACCOUNT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON AND HIS FEARS FOR FUTURE. IN HIS RECENT TALKS IN BEIRUT WITH POLITIPDANS(READ CHAMOUN), HE FOUND GREAT DISSATISFACTION WITH U.S. FOR NOT PROVIDING MORE ASSISTANCE DURING CURRENT CRISIS AND FOR BEING UNRESPONSIVE DURING PAST TWO YEARS TO LEBANON'S ARMS REQUESTS. FACTIONS OTHER THAN ARMY HAVE BEEN FREELY SUPPLIED BY THEIR SUPPORTERS AND NOW ARE SO STRONG THAT ARMY CANNOT MAINTAIN CONTROL. AL-KHALIL ACCEPTED DCM'S EXPLANATION THAT WE WERE BEING AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO LEBANESE ARMS REQUESTS BUT HAD SERIUOS PROBLEMS OF MANUFACTURING LEAD-TIME WHICH AFFECTED OUR OWN ARMED FORCES, DESPITE THIS HE NOTED THERE WAS STRONG FEELING AMONG LEBANESE POLITICAINS THAT WE COULD HAVE DONE MORE. AL-KHALIL SAID HE HAD LONG ADVOCATED NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION WHICH WOULD GET YOUNG MEN OUT OF FACTIONAL MILITIAS AND INTO ARMY WHERE THEY COULD BE TRAINED, INDOCTRINATED AND USED FOR NATIONAL RATHER THAN PAROCHIAL PURPOSES. HE STILL FAVORS THIS IDEA, ALTHOUGH E
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REALIZES IT HAS BEEN MADE MORE DIFFICLUT BY RECENT EVENTS.

2. AL-KHALIL SAID HE WAS NOT IN FAVOR OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S BEING FORCED OUT BECUASE IT WOULD SET UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT FOR OTHER CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION. IF HE HAS TO GO IT SHOULD BE ACCORDING TO CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES, BUT HE BELIEVES INSTITUTION OF PRESIDENCY COULD BE SALVAGED IF FRANGIE COULD BE MADE TO EXERT STRONGER LEADERSHIP AND TAKE CRITICAL DECISIONS.

3. AL-KHALIL ALSO THINKS LEBANON SHOULD JOIN SYRIA AND JORDAN IN JOINT COMMAND STRUCTURE AND CLAIMS TO HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH KING HUSSEIN AND CHAMOUN WHO AGREE. THIS WULD GIVE SYRIA AND JORDAN ENTREE TO HELP STABILIZE SITUATION WHICH THEY CANNOT GET INTO NOW OFFICIALLY, ALTHOUGH HE CLAIMS SYRIA ALREADY HAS COMMAND CONTROL OF SOME PLO UNITS UNDER SYRIAN OFFICERS. ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT ISRAEL'S REACTION TO THIS WOULD BE, AL-KHALIL ASSERTED IT WAS NOT IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO HAVE GOVT OF LEBANON DISINTEGRATE, PERHAPS TO BE REPLACED BY LIBYAN TYPE RADICAL REGIME, ATL LEAST IN SOUTH.

4. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH POLCOUNS, AL-KHALIL MADE SAME POINTS BUT ADDED THAT LEBANESE POLITICIANS WERE ALSO UNHAPPY WITH U.S. SUPPORT FOR ELEMENTS WHICH WERE TEARING COUNTRY APART AND DISCREDITING IT IN EYES OF OTHER COUNTRIES. AS EXAMPLE HE CITED OUR"SUPPORT" FOR IMAM MUSA AL-SADR WHO HAD STARTED MOVEMENT HE WAS NOW UNABLE TO CONTROL AND WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH ALL LEFTIST GROUPS. POLCOUNS REPLIED THAT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE WE WERE NOT SUPPORTING IMAM BUT MERELY OFFERING HIM LEADER GRANT TO U.S. WHERE WE WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE AND MODERATE HIS VIEWS.
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